

**Draft Summary of the Environmental Work Group Meeting
Oroville Facilities Relicensing (FERC Project No. 2100)
February 25, 2004**

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) hosted a meeting for the Environmental Work Group (EWG) on February 25, 2004 in Oroville.

A summary of the discussion, decisions made, and action items is provided below. This summary is not intended to be a transcript, analysis of the meeting, or to indicate agreement or disagreement with any of the items summarized, except where expressly stated. The intent is to present a summary for interested parties who could not attend the meeting. The following are attachments to this summary:

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| Attachment 1 | Meeting Agenda |
| Attachment 2 | Meeting Attendees |
| Attachment 3 | Revised Resource Action Tracking Matrix, revised 2/24/04 |
| Attachment 4 | Narrative Reports: FRH 1 and FRH 18 |
| Attachment 5 | Narrative Reports: EWG 27, 99, 45, 47, and 42 |
| Attachment 6 | Presentation on EWG-27 Isolate, Modify, Fill or Reclaim Robinson Riffle Borrow Pit |
| Attachment 7 | SP-F16 Phase 2 Report: Evaluation of Project Effects on Instream Flows and Fish Habitat |
| Attachment 8 | SP-10, Task 3B Growth Investigations of Wild and Hatchery Steelhead in the Lower Feather River |

I. Introduction

Attendees were welcomed to the EWG meeting. Attendees introduced themselves and their affiliations. The desired outcomes of the meeting were discussed as listed on the meeting agenda. The meeting agenda and list of meeting attendees are appended to this summary as Attachments 1 and 2, respectively.

II. Action Items – January 28, 2004 Environmental Work Group Meeting

A summary of the January 28, 2004 EWG meeting is posted on the relicensing web site. The Facilitator reviewed the status of action items from that meeting as follows:

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|---------------------------|---|
| Action Item #E120: | Add Hatchery Task Force Resource Actions to the matrix. |
| Status: | Mike Manwaring (MWH) reported that this action is in progress and the resource actions will be entered as soon as the development process is completed. |
| Action Item #E121: | Report on individual agency permitting activities for the recent modifications to the Sunset Pumps facility. |
| Status: | Eric Theiss (NOAA) reported that there is a standing 404 permit however Laurie Hatton (SWRCB) noted that no permit was processed by the SWRCB. Further investigation is required and an additional update will be provided. |
| Action Item #E122: | Follow-up on transfer of tasks from SP-T6 to LUWG. |
| Status: | The Facilitator reported that the Resource Area Manager for the LUWG and Ted Alvarez were reviewing the tasks to determine if the information has been developed within the LUWG studies. |

The Facilitator noted an agenda change, removing SP-G2, Task 7 report under Agenda Item VI. Study Deliverables and Implementation Updates, Reports.

III. Modeling Update

Curtis Creel (DWR) was not available at the meeting to provide the update but the EWG suggested that the next Modeling Workshop should be delayed if modeling results are not available. The Facilitator will relay the suggestion to Curtis.

IV. Resource Action Discussion

Task Force Summaries and Next Meetings

Brad Cavallo (DWR) reported on the February 2nd Hatchery Task Force meeting and described proposed resource actions under development by the Task Force in detail later in the meeting (see detailed discussion below).

Wayne Dyok (MWH) reported on the February 9th Flow/Temperature Task Force meeting. He described further development of draft attribute tables and identification of key species' stressors discussed at the Task Force meeting. Mike Melanson (MWD) requested the charts synthesizing biological criteria that were distributed at the recent Flow/Temperature Task Force meeting be posted on the Project web site and sent to those that request it. The EWG noted the need to discuss how and when routine maintenance operations are conducted to avoid potential impacts to biological resources. The topic was added to the next Flow/Temperature Task Force agenda.

David Olson reported on the Fish Passage technical discussion held on February 19th. Terry Mills (DWR) noted that an update on F15, Task 4 Fish Passage model would be distributed at the March EWG meeting. He added that a follow-up meeting and site visit would be scheduled with Dennis Dorratcague, a fish passage expert. Comments on the F15, Task 4 report are due by March 15th.

Eric Theiss reported that NOAA Fisheries does not feel that the model provides usable results and that NOAA would provide written comments along with suggestions for changes to assumptions used in the model. The EWG discussed the modeling assumptions and noted that any assumptions could be adjusted, provided there is sound scientific data to support the adjustment. Wayne Dyok pointed out that the model includes all of the passage elements and helps to show which elements are most important and which elements we might need additional information for analysis. Eric Theiss expressed concern over the use of the model in negotiations or for cumulative impact analysis. He proposed that the EWG instead move NOAA's proposal for a phased implementation of a fish passage program forward. Terry Mills suggested that the model could be used to identify elements of the fish passage program to test and establish performance targets necessary to evaluate the relative success of the program.

Sharon Stohrer (SWRCB) expressed concern with moving an endangered species into the existing habitat conditions upstream of Oroville Reservoir and suggested that, due to changes expected in the North Fork Feather River to achieve lower water temperatures, the program should be delayed until more suitable habitat is available. Eric Theiss noted NOAA's concerns with losses due to angling (pre-spawn mortality) and said they are interested in passing only Spring-run chinook and steelhead. Anna Kastner (CDFG) noted that CDFG epidemiologists are interested in discussing passage and disease transmission issues and requested the topic be placed on the next Fish Passage Task Force meeting agenda.

Eric Theiss asked for time on the next Hatchery Task Force meeting agenda for a presentation on alternative fish hatchery water sources by FishPro.

Task Forces Meeting Schedule

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|-------------------|--|-----------------|------|
| Hatchery | (to be determined - rescheduled due to scheduling conflict for NOAA) | | |
| EWG Fisheries | March 2, 2004 | 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. | SWRI |
| Flow/Temperature | March 12, 2004 | 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. | OFD |
| Fish Passage | March 16, 2004 | 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. | SWRI |
| Modeling Workshop | March 19, 2004 (to be rescheduled) | | |

Updated Tracking Matrix and Flow Chart

Mike Manwaring distributed an updated version of the tracking matrix (Attachment 3) and asked the EWG to review and provide comments back to the task forces. He explained the few changes this month including an update on expected completion dates for Narrative Reports and some consolidation of terrestrial resource actions based on the developing draft Recreation Management Plan. Mike noted that EWG-27 has been reclassified from a 4 based on SP-G2 results. Wayne Dyok added that the proposed resource actions under development by the Hatchery Task Force would be added to the flow charts when completed.

Hatchery Task Force Resource Actions

Brad Cavallo (DWR) distributed narrative reports on two hatchery-related resource actions: FRH 1 Comprehensive Marking/Tagging Program at the Feather River Hatchery (FRH) and FRH 18 Comprehensive Adaptive Management Program for the Feather River Hatchery (Attachment 4). FRH 1 consolidates all proposals related to tagging programs. He explained that all Central Valley hatcheries are currently undergoing a review of their tagging programs so the next step would be to seek expert input on recommended strategies to include at the Feather River Hatchery. Chuck Hanson (SWC) noted that the costs should include funding required to read all of the tags. The EWG discussed the resource action and agreed it is a Category 2.

FRH 18 consolidates all of the proposals related to potential changes to hatchery operations. Chuck Hanson agreed with the concept of adaptive management and the flexibility it allows but suggested that it is important to have good experimental design to test specific potential management changes and then a rigorous monitoring program to evaluate effectiveness and merit for potential program implementation. He noted that the costs included in the narrative report do not include this. Carson Cox (CDFG) suggested we develop criteria for how decisions would be made and where the funding would come from. The EWG discussed the role that the FRH plays in fulfilling a mitigation requirement and Eric Theiss noted that if other programs result in successful recovery, then NOAA would likely revisit the emphasis and allocation of resources to the hatchery. Anna Kastner reminded the EWG that the salmon stamp collected from ocean commercial fishermen funds the enhancement portion of FRH production. Wayne Dyok suggested that such activities at the FRH would be evaluated under the CEQA cumulative effects analysis. The EWG agreed that FRH 18 is a Category 1.

Brad Cavallo described other actions under discussion within the Hatchery Task Force including structural changes to the facilities such as relining the raceways, segregating Spring-run holding tanks, alternative water intake source, water treatment, etc. Chuck Hanson noted that the water treatment program is related to the fish passage program and unnecessary if fish passage is not implemented. Eric Theiss added that the alternative water source (slant wells beneath the Diversion Pool) would also eliminate the need for water treatment. Anna Kastner suggested an

alternative source of water might affect FRH/Feather River imprinting on the fish. Brad will bring additional narrative reports on these actions to the next EWG meeting.

Narrative Reports

DWR distributed narrative reports covering EWG 27, 99, 45, 47, and 42 (Attachment 5). Bruce Ross (DWR) reviewed the narrative report for EWG-27 Isolate, Modify, Fill or Reclaim Robinson Riffle Borrow Pit (presentation provided as Attachment 6) and presented historic photographs and mapping as GIS layers to reconstruct channel movements. This resource action was previously categorized as a 4 but, based on information developed for SP-G2, is being reconsidered as a possible candidate for side-channel habitat activities. The EWG agreed to re-categorize EWG 27 as a 2.

Jason Kindropp (DWR) reviewed EWG 99 Enhancement of Side Channels for Salmonid Rearing from Thermalito Afterbay Outlet to Honcut Creek. He described the activities as similar to those considered in EWG 16A and 16B, with control structures installed at the head of the side channels to control the amount of flow and temperatures. Jason noted that current temperatures are not suitable for steelhead rearing but channel projects could be prioritized using modeling results to identify locations that might achieve desired temperatures. The EWG discussed the permitting requirements for such activities and agreed that the costs indicated may not be sufficient to cover both permitting and construction. This resource action is a Category 2.

Eric See (DWR) described EWG 26 Fish Habitat Enhancement in Thermalito Afterbay. The narrative report was distributed at the January EWG meeting. Eric noted that this resource action is similar to the habitat enhancement programs currently in place in Oroville Reservoir. He also identified potential conflicts with ESA habitat. This resource action is a Category 1.

Eric See described EWG 45 Create Trophy Salmonid Stocking Program in Thermalito Afterbay as a recreational enhancement that might offset fishing regulation closures caused by other resource actions. The EWG discussed the role of disease in limiting the species that could be planted and potential conflicts with existing warm water fisheries in the Afterbay. This resource action remains a Category 2.

Eric See described EWG 47 Create Trout Stocking Program in Suitable OWA Ponds as a resource action supported by the local angling community. This would be a seasonal program focused on ponds with suitable temperatures. The EWG categorized this resource action as a 2 and noted that CDFG would need to weigh in with comments.

Brad Cavallo noted that EWG 42 Release Hatchery Steelhead Earlier or at Smaller Size to Reduce Their Predation on Juvenile Wild Salmon and Steelhead has been re-categorized as a 5.

IV. Study Deliverables and Implementation Updates

Reports

SP-F16 Phase 2

Brad Cavallo distributed copies of the Phase 2 Report: Evaluation of Project Effects on Instream Flows and Fish Habitat (Attachment 7) and explained that there are some questions regarding the usefulness of the WUA curves for juvenile rearing ('u-shaped' curves) and that they were omitted from the report. The EWG agreed to review the report and discuss the modeling results

at the next EWG meeting. Eric Theiss suggested that the analysis of the omitted WUA curves be documented and the EWG agreed to convene a panel of experts to review the results. The panel should include Paul Bratovich, Stacy Lee, Tom Payne and appropriate agency representatives.

SP-F10, Task 3B

Copies of SP-10, Task 3B Growth Investigations of Wild and Hatchery Steelhead in the Lower Feather River (Attachment 8) were distributed but the discussion was deferred until the next EWG meeting.

V. Next Steps

The participants agreed that the next EWG meeting would focus primarily on the review of narrative reports and study reports. Terry Mills reminded the EWG that he needs to go back to the Plenary Group the day before the next EWG meeting in March with recommendations and he is likely going to present the flow charts highlighting Category 1 and 2 RAs. The next EWG meeting is:

Date: March 24, 2004
Time: 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Location: Oroville Field Division

Action Items

The following action items identified by the EWG includes a description of the action, the participant responsible for the action, and due date.

Action Item #E123: Distribute and post on the web site copies of stressor charts developed by the Flow/Temperature Task Force.
Responsible: DWR
Due Date: March 24, 2004

Action Item #E124: Initiate a panel of experts to review results of PHABSIM and make recommendations to EWG.
Responsible: DWR (Panel should include Paul Bratovich, Stacy Lee, and Tom Payne)
Due Date: March 24, 2004

Carry-over

Action Item #E120: Add Hatchery Task Force Resource Actions to the matrix.
Responsible: DWR/Consulting Team
Due Date: When completed